

The Point News

November 18, 2008

News for Virginia MRC Units & EP&R

VIRGINIA



LOUDOUN MRC: Staging to Manage Volunteers

CodeFlu 08, held on Saturday, November 8th, was a full-scale exercise with a Pandemic Influenza scenario having a flu vaccination medical Point-of Dispensing (POD) for providing free vaccinations to clients and a Staging Site for registering, assigning, and deploying workers. The purpose of the exercise was to test Loudoun County's ability to administer flu vaccine to the public in a mass setting. At the POD site 313 community members received a flu shot.

Besides Loudoun County Health Department staff, approximately 140 Loudoun MRC volunteers participated. At the staging site 99 volunteers received their flu shot, after which they were assigned to their position, received Just-In-Time training and were transported via school bus to the POD site.

Loudoun MRC's process for emergency volunteer management is a model that can be applied to other MRC units. Not only is it effective, but it was staffed by many non-medical volunteers. Regardless if you have a large or small MRC unit, all units need to develop the capability to manage MRC volunteers and spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers.



Above: MRC volunteers receive Just-In-Time training taught by a MRC volunteer at the Staging Site.

For more info about this exercise contact Francis Rath at Francis.Rath@loudoun.gov

Kudos Loudoun MRC and health district!

County partners supporting the exercise as participants included the Loudoun County Office of Emergency Management, Loudoun County Public Schools, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, [Virginia Defense Force](#), American Red Cross (Loudoun Chapter), Loudoun County Community Emergency Response Team, Inova Loudoun Hospital, Loudoun County Public Works, and Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services.

Alexandria & Arlington MRC: Regional Exercises by Cyndi Lake

On Saturday, November 8, 2008 both Arlington and Alexandria participated in a Medication Dispensing Exercise to test our ability to quickly provide medication to residents both within our jurisdictions and across our borders. We opened 2 non-medical dispensing sites in Arlington and 3 in Alexandria, all of which sit on our borders. In Alexandria, we used mostly MRC volunteers to staff our sites, 39 total, along with Health Department Staff. Arlington used 28 MRC volunteers, supported by CERT volunteers, nursing students and a number of Public Health staff. Arlington also pushed to Fort Myer who set up their own internal dispensing site where they saw 333 households. Alexandria tested the push method by using CERT and Fire Department volunteers to deliver information at several apartment and condominium complexes. In Alexandria, a total of 758 households were seen, with 177 at all 3 sites and 581 through the push method. At the 2 Arlington sites, a total of 263 households were seen. We gave out 1,335 M&M fun packs and 390 Skittle fun packs. Now that's a lot of candy!

While we did not see the numbers we would have liked in the public turnout, it was overall a very successful drill. We were afforded the opportunity to conduct training with our MRC volunteers, use other partner agencies in our jurisdictions and test our plans. We received feedback from MRC volunteers that they really enjoyed the experience. And now, it's time to tackle the After Action Report...

Kudos Alexandria and Arlington MRC!

On the Calendar...

November 20th & 21st State Flu EX

November 24th, Noon: ESAR-VHP volunteer reporting numbers are due.

December 3rd at 10am: VA MRC meeting via polycom—Please email Rich Watson at Richard.Watson@vdh.virginia.gov to confirm your location. An agenda for the meeting is attached.

December 16th from 10 am to 4pm: New MRC Unit Leader Workshop, Madison Building, Richmond. Sam Schaffzin, TA Advisor, Carla Holder Region III Coordinator, and Jennifer Freeland will facilitate this informative session for New Unit Leaders.

2009 Monthly MRC meetings: the first Wed of the month from 10 am—12pm. Dates include: Jan 7th, Feb 4th, March 4th, May 6th, June 3rd, July 1st, Aug 5th, Sept 2nd, Oct 7th, Nov 11th, Dec 2nd. Please check your schedules and confirm your availability at the Dec 3rd meeting.

VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
Protecting You and Your Environment

*Emergency Preparedness
& Response Programs*

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State Awards for Volunteers

On behalf of Governor Tim Kaine, the Governor's Advisory Board on National and Community Service, Virginia Corps, and the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service are working together to recognize the significant contributions of Virginia citizens to the life and welfare of the Commonwealth and its people. In April during National Volunteer Service Week, awards to recognize these exceptional contributions will be made at a reception in Richmond. Awards will be presented to organizations, businesses, families, and individuals whose volunteer and community service efforts focus on building and strengthening the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This year's categories include: Business, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery, Faith-Based Organization, Family, Government, National Service (Individual), National Service (Program), Nonprofit Group, Senior Volunteer, Volunteer, and Youth Volunteer.

For more information or to nominate a person or group, visit <http://www.vaservice.org/go/volunteer/award/>, call 1-800-638-3839 or e-mail info@vaservice.org. The nomination period ends at 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 2nd, 2009.

From the National and State Perspective

I'll admit I am a type "A" person and have rather high expectations. Which is why after attending the Region II & III MRC conference, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that in relation to other states Virginia MRC units and their capabilities are well above others. It doesn't by any means indicate that we are perfect, but in comparison we have accomplished great tasks. Many states are still struggling with liability coverage and with integrating their MRC units into the public health infrastructure. Additionally, some ESAR-VHP programs have been developed totally independent from units and without the input from local MRC coordinators. I'm thankful that those hurdles are not ahead of us in Virginia.

At the state we recognize that "there is absolutely NO (0, zip, zilch, nada) way we could hope to address the dispensing challenge without the great work done by volunteers.", stated Bob Mauskopf. Such was demonstrated by the multiple exercises volunteers have participated in this month. What we haven't demonstrated as clearly is how successful MRC units are in developing the capabilities to meet the emergency surge staffing needs and in supporting public health initiatives. We need to continue to put the spotlight on the MRC so not only will our partners see the value in our program, but so will all VDH staff. Long term sustainability of the MRC depends on our ability to show the return on investment for volunteers.

To help put the spotlight on the MRC please forward me pictures, newsletters, summaries and lessons learned from your activities. I was able to attend the exercises in Loudoun and Alexandria at the beginning of the month. If you have an event that you would like me to attend please let me know.

I thought I'd share a picture I took last month when I was out in Bedford County in the SW region. As a native to Virginia I am consistently reminded of how beautiful our state is. I am extremely thankful to live in Virginia and work with such great people who care so deeply about our fellow Virginians.

Thank you for all you do to protect the health of Virginia!
Best wishes for a relaxing and healthy Thanksgiving holiday.

Jennifer

How will the economic crisis affect volunteering?

Will our economy change the value on volunteering? I certainly hope not, but the economy has dictated a shift in the priorities of our nation. The following article suggests that instead of people donating money that we may see an increase in their willingness to donate their time. You can read the article at the Energize Inc. website:

<http://www.energizeinc.com/hot/2008/08nov.html>

If you find the article helpful I encourage you to sign-up for their E-journal.

It's TIME to...

- Work on your MRC unit's strategic plan. Regional planning sessions are available to assist you. Please contact me to schedule.
- Develop your 2009 training and event calendar. Collaborate with local partners and fellow MRC units to share training opportunities.
- Create a 2008 unit report highlighting the success of your program.
- Update your profile on the MRC National Website
- Consider sending holiday greeting cards or messages to your volunteers.

In the Works...

- Welcome pages for new and returning volunteers have been updated in the VVHS. Take a look!
- A consolidated report to track unit activities and demonstrate program value. Stay Tuned.

